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There is an immediate need for improving the training of reading teachers and specialists. A new program should provide additional instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Preservice teachers whether elementary or secondary, need some formal education in the teaching of reading. Graduate reading specialists should have (1) a minimum of a master's degree, (2) demonstrated success in the classroom, (3) an apparent desire for personal growth, and (4) skill in gaining the respect of and empathy with teachers and pupils. In addition, they should fulfill the standards of the International Reading Association. The graduate training should be on a full-time basis for 18 to 24 months. There should also be access to further education and to other forms of professional stimulation. To be successful, the program should include not only improved curricula, but also improved methodology and internship experiences, and it must be supported at the local, state, and national levels. (BS)

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PREPARING TEACHERS OF READING AND READING SPECIALISTS

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Social scientists have described the present decade as a revolutionary one. Not only are we living in the midst of profound social change, but the development of educational technology and the explosion of knowledge are affecting the role of the teacher. An understanding of the contemporary revolution clearly demonstrates the need for imaginative planning and the formation of desirable guidelines for preparing all teachers, including teachers of reading and reading specialists.

Granted that changes in teacher education cannot be made piecemeal, a commitment to re-evaluate the professional training

of reading personnel should not imply discarding everything or, indeed, most of it. Rather, it involves some degree of consensus about goals, a willingness to recognize certain inadequacies of the status quo, skill in conceptualizing the modus operandi, and the use of creative approaches for achieving objectives. Nor should the magnitude of the task deter the taking of first steps which, ideally, could influence the next several generations. Can we continue to afford to "stumble into the future," as John Gardner said, when the future so quickly becomes our present?

Accepting the premise that the teacher is the most vital element in the educational process and that the reading specialist is in the most strategic position to help the teacher, let us examine some possibilities for improving their preparation.

Program Objectives

The old adage is no longer true that it is easier to move a cemetery than it is to make curriculum changes. It is still true, however, that a child learning to read is engaged in a relatively complicated process. Moreover, the complexity of the reading act has implications for the nature of teacher preparation.

In the past, educators tended to assume sole responsibility for defining program objectives, whereas, today, it is considered essential to involve consultants from several related disciplines

and from the school systems in which the actual training takes place. Included in the first group would be representatives from psychology, sociology, medicine, linguistics, literature, research, and others. The second would bring together teachers, superintendents, principals, supervisors, board members, and members of state departments of education. Through coordinated efforts of each of these segments of the educational community, institutional changes can be created. In fact, the Triple T Project of the U.S. Office of Education may facilitate planning of this type. In the meantime, action should be initiated to bring about more effective relationships among the academic disciplines, the educational disciplines, and the schools. If harmony can be accomplished, this team can formulate fundamental concepts of what reading personnel should learn during their preservice and in-service years. One could anticipate that sound concepts of growth and development would be important components of both programs, with some emphasis upon developmental imbalances as well as normalcies. Cognitive and affective factors would receive major consideration also with concern for varying learning styles of individual pupils. Special attention probably would be given to the theories of Piaget and Bruner with suggested practices in classroom management arising from these theories. Undoubtedly, prospective teachers would be expected to gain more information and better understanding about com-

munication disorders, becoming acquainted with the work of vision, hearing, and speech specialists in order to carry out classroom activities with children who are handicapped in those areas.

Over and beyond these goals, the program would include a number of others which cannot be predicted at this time. One projection appears particularly realistic, however, since by the year 2000, it is estimated that three major urban centers alone may contain 60 per cent of the American population. Hence, it is reasonable to expect that future reading personnel must acquire expanded knowledge and competence in dealing with the problems of low-income areas, with special work on developing skills in language and reading.

Regardless of proposed objectives, the rigidity of teacher preparation which repelled many able students in the past will be replaced by programs of greater flexibility. It is entirely possible that for certain capable, highly motivated,young people with A.B. degrees (i.e.,Peace Corps returnees) policies which regulate entrance to teaching will be relaxed. The unique experiences of such groups in working with children in social welfare agencies or in community programs will be recognized. In some instances, provisions for these differences are being made by a number of recent training programs. Already many schools are the beneficiaries as these individuals work with children who have learning disabilities.

Changing the Status Quo

The American scene is characterized presently by an increasing emphasis upon education. Studies relating to teacher competence which were conducted during the sixties have served to stimulate changes in preparatory practices. The reports of Conant and the Harvard-Carnegie reading surveys have been discussed widely, (1), and now it is anticipated that the Sixty-seventh Yearbook, Part II, of the National Society for the Study of Education, will influence the future directions of reading instruction. (2) Some of the recommendations proposed in these publications have been implemented, but many have not. General suggestions for strengthening preservice programs included:

1. Extend teacher preparation from four to five years to ensure a broad foundation in liberal arts and sciences as well as intensive professional training;
2. Recruit and select outstanding potential career teachers;
3. Require a minimum of two courses in reading for elementary school certification, one in developmental and one in diagnostic and corrective techniques;
4. Require a course in secondary reading for

certification at the high school level;

5. Offer elective courses and independent study in reading for undergraduate education majors who wish to specialize in this area of the curriculum;
6. Broaden content and methodology of developmental reading for prospective elementary teachers to provide more attention to both primary-and upper-grade instructional procedures;
7. Emphasize student teaching or internship experiences in realistic classroom settings under the supervision of qualified master teachers;
8. Work more closely with public schools in establishing optimal conditions for student teaching;
9. Conduct follow-up studies to determine the needs of in-service personnel as a basis for revising collegiate offerings;
10. Evaluate the effectiveness of the whole spectrum of preparation for beginning teachers of reading in order to overcome preservice deficiencies.

Several of the above suggestions are employed currently in one or more colleges throughout the United States. Needed now is

a period of acceleration in which priority consideration is given to concentrated inquiry and in-depth development of dramatically better professional practices in preservice education.

During this decade, the grave shortage of qualified reading specialists has become increasingly apparent. Until recently, universities have failed generally to provide both the quantity and quality of personnel required to upgrade the reading skills of this nation's school children. Furthermore, a vast shift in emphasis as to the role of the reading specialist has occurred. In moving from a traditional concept by which a supervisor observed, held conferences, and supplied rather pat answers, to a program in which the staff works together to exchange professional expertise, the reading specialist actually must be a coordinator, a facilitator, a person who engenders a climate in which people can grow through group processes. He is an individual who must wear several "hats". Obviously, his training must reflect these varied responsibilities.

As a minimum, it has been recommended that the reading specialist possess: (1) a master's degree, (2) demonstrated success in the classroom, (3) an apparent desire to greet change as an opportunity for personal growth, and (4) skill in gaining respect and empathy with teachers and pupils. He should also fulfill the standards formulated by the International Reading Association.

Because few experienced teachers receive sabbatical leaves, the usual pattern for those who are interested in reading is to extend their graduate program over a period of several years. The urgency of national and local demands for well-qualified personnel, however, makes full-time study imperative for a shorter time. Nor is an intensive summer workshop of great value in relieving the situation. In fact, many believe that such training cannot be accomplished in less than 18-24 months. Time is required to assimilate the vocabulary, content, and practices related to this field of specialization. Time is necessary,also, for discarding inappropriate concepts about developmental and corrective reading. Hence, it appears desirable that potential career people enroll for a year of professional study and directed observations in classrooms and reading centers. Such training could be followed by a second year devoted to field experiences and a supervised paid residency in which the neophyte assumes responsibility for working with teachers and children in a designated school. Participation in the planning and conduct of an evaluation of a school's reading program could be an essential part of the program. Through individual conferences and seminars, the resident intern could continue to mature.

For the reading specialist, particularly, there should be continuous access to further formal education and other forms of

professional stimulation. He must become a "self-teacher" who seeks personal ways of "self-renewal."

Modus Operandi

It would be somewhat less than realistic to minimize the importance of improved curricula, improved methodology, and improved internship experiences as major components in designing new teacher-education programs. The scope of reading is so broad that a number of techniques must be utilized to extend the theoretically oriented college lectures of the past.

To furnish a setting in which there will be intellectual involvement and excitement, professors are making greater use of related projects, demonstrations, case studies, critical incidents, films, and professional literature. But interaction among students and between students and their professors is being fostered by a variety of other approaches also. Microteaching, for example, is serving as an intermediate step between methods courses and actual classroom work.

In a teaching techniques lab, similar to one at the University of Illinois, microteaching can add a new dimension to student teaching preparation. It can be used equally well as a complementary experience in the training of reading specialists. Basically, this approach utilizes a real lesson with live children and a live teacher, and when each presentation is videotaped the

teacher can analyze his teaching behavior in conference with his instructor (or in a group of his peers) as he sees himself in action. Feedback and reenforcement sessions are valuable in helping reading personnel become aware of how the variables of process affect the products of learning. In addition to videotape playback, microteaching relies heavily on films of master teachers demonstrating behavior patterns or skills to be learned. The promising results achieved by this approach can be attributed to its encouragement for change and improvement.

The years ahead will place greater demands upon readers to react thoughtfully to a rising tide of print. Reading personnel, of necessity, will assume heavier responsibility for helping pupils develop critical reading skills. Moreover, unless teachers acquire the attitudes, skills, and strategies that are fundamental to all inquiry, they will continue to perpetuate their former role as dispensers of factual information. If they are to be successful in their central role as stimulators of learning, colleges must provide training in inquiry as a process of instruction.

Future reading staff members will receive more work on diagnosing the learning needs of pupils and on planning to meet them. The utilization of programed materials, computer-assisted instruction, and auto-instructional devices will free school people to devote more attention to diagnostic teaching. Indeed,

good teaching still bears a striking resemblance to Mark Hopkins and his enthralled pupil, seated on a log.

Rarely do those who specialize in reading work alone. They must be keenly aware of and sensitive to the human relationships aspects of their positions. For this reason, greater emphasis must be placed upon helping them acquire effective procedures for working with groups and/or individuals. Such activities will involve them in the examination of techniques employed in sensitivity training and in interaction analysis. Practicum experiences should be provided in both areas.

Where and how American colleges could begin to effect desired changes in the education of reading personnel should receive primary attention, for improvement in the teaching of reading will result only through dedicated, well-prepared teachers. Individual commitment and organizational action, therefore, must be generated at all levels -- local, state, and national. Through such action and generous financial support, the future of reading in the United States will become brighter.

Because the quality of an educated society is involved, I suggest that one or more philanthropic foundations properly could devote its funding program for the next several years exclusively to this vast challenge.

This is indeed a time for vision in a largely uncharted

field. It is also a time for cooperative study and action.

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